

Nottingham City Council

Greater Nottingham Light Rapid Transit Advisory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held remotely via Zoom and live-streamed on YouTube on Tuesday 8 December 2020 from 2:02pm to 2:55pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Adele Williams (Chair)
Councillor Phil Rostance (Vice Chair)
Councillor Jim Creamer
Councillor Phil Jackson
Councillor Eric Kerry
Councillor Dave Liversidge
Councillor John Longdon
Councillor AJ Matsiko

Absent

Councillor Samuel Gardiner
Councillor Parry Tsimbiridis

NET User Representatives in attendance:

Roger Bacon	(Travel Watch East Midlands)
Justin Donne	(Nottingham Federation of Small Businesses)
Helen Hemstock	(RideWise)
✓ Hugh McClintock	(Pedals)
✓ Chris Roy	(Nottingham Trent University)
Jim Thomas	(Nottinghamshire Better Transport)

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Andrew Conroy	- Chief Operating Officer, Tramlink Nottingham
Andrew Holdstock	- Senior NET Project Engineer, Nottingham City Council
Kate Knight	- Assistant NET Project Manager, Nottingham City Council
Mike Mabey	- Head of Operations, Nottingham Trams
Adrian Mann	- Governance Officer, Nottingham City Council
Lorraine Salt-Pulford	- Nottingham City Disability Involvement Group

9 Changes to Membership

The Committee noted that Nick Chischniak has stepped down as the representative of the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce.

10 Apologies for Absence

Jim Thomas

11 Declarations of Interests

None

12 Minutes

The Committee confirmed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2020 as a correct record and they were signed by the Chair.

13 Operational Performance and Progress Update

Mike Mabey, Head of Operations at Nottingham Trams, presented a report on operational performance for the period of August to October 2020. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the reliability (97.6%) and punctuality (98.1%) of the tram service during the period has remained extremely high. Following a six-month term of operating a Sunday-service timetable, full service was recommenced on 3 August and a normal timetable has been used since. However, passenger numbers and travel patterns have fluctuated due to the various levels of Covid-19 restrictions that have been put in place by the Government;
- (b) having entered Tier 2 on 14 October (with a 10:00pm curfew for all pubs and restaurants), Nottingham was moved into Tier 3 on 26 October (with only pubs that serve substantial meals allowed to open, essential travel only, and no mixing of households in either an indoor or outdoor environment). This was followed by the introduction of more restrictive national measures from 5 November, at which time it became necessary to close the NET Travel Centre temporarily;
- (c) it is mandatory to wear face coverings when using public transport and, to remind customers of this requirement, additional signage has been placed on all of the twin doors on the trams. Current recording shows that approximately 90% of customers use face coverings. An enhanced tram cleaning regime continues, including the additional deep cleans of trams overnight, and all touch points are sanitised at the terminal stops throughout the day. The notices on tram seat covers have also been refreshed, to remind customers to leave empty seats for the purposes of social distancing. However, this can sometimes cause confusion, as people from the same household travelling together do not need to distance from each other – but the signs do give reassurance to passengers not travelling in a household group;
- (d) Community Protection Officers (CPOs) have carried out more than 250 patrols on the tram network during November, assisting with the 10:00pm curfew and confiscating alcohol. The presence of CPOs provides safety reassurance to passengers;
- (e) schools re-opened on a staggered basis in the week commencing 31 August. The guidance from the Government was that school pupils should walk, cycle or drive and stride to school, and avoid public transport where possible. NET contacted each of the nine schools that are served directly by the tram to understand the volume of pupils that need to use the network – which is still a high number;
- (f) as Becket and Emanuel schools are located alongside each other, sharing the two tram stops of Wilford Lane and Wilford Village, management of social distancing at these stops was challenging on the first day of the schools reopening. However, the head teachers of both schools provided staff at the end of the day to assist Travel Officers in maintaining social distancing at the stops, which proved a great success, and the stops are now well managed. The maximum number of trams for safe operation were put on the network for school

reopening and, in addition, the City Council provided three buses to both schools, to ease the pressure at the tram stops;

- (g) the arrival of university students in September coincided with the Government's 10:00pm curfew for pubs and restaurants, and this presented several challenges for the tram system when these closed at night, as a large number of people then wanted to travel at the same time, but the trams' carrying capacity due to social distancing requirements is reduced significantly. Additional resources were needed to manage the city centre stops, to control access and egress from the trams, and a private security firm was brought in to assist the Travel Officers. Support was also provided by CPOs. Barriers were introduced at the city centre stops, to assist with managing customers and to maintain social distancing;
- (h) an additional two trams were operated from 10:00pm to improve capacity and, during Friday and Saturday nights, two buses were in operation from Old Market Square to the University of Nottingham campus. Agreement was also reached with Nottingham City Transport to allow tram tickets to be accepted on buses. The acceptance of tram tickets by other public transport providers is not a new initiative, as the scheme has often been used during periods of network disruption. However, during Coronavirus, the initiative has only been needed to help manage customer travel during curfew periods;
- (i) there has been a greater than normal increase in staff absence from the onset of Coronavirus, though this has often been due to drivers' children being sent home from school and requiring a Coronavirus test, rather than as a direct result of driver sickness. Tests for children took some time when the schools returned, and parents needed to remain in isolation until the results were known. However, tests can now be completed within one day, and can also be carried out by the in-house Occupational Health team, so drivers now need to spend less time in isolation due to a family member showing symptoms;
- (j) when at work, drivers are protected within a bubble in the cab, which has its own ventilation unit and separate access. Driver absence has been managed by utilising spare staff from other departments who are qualified to drive the trams. The same number of staff are assigned to ticket checking as before the Coronavirus period but, in the interests of protecting staff health, revenue protection activity is only carried out at key locations at certain times, rather than across the whole system;
- (k) it is important to support staff maintain their mental wellbeing, and assistance has been provided by the introduction of six mental health first aiders, a Simply Health counselling service, and a new topic on the employee app (EMMA) dealing with mental health, debt management, nutrition and exercise;
- (l) an app has been developed that will enable customers to top up their Robin Hood Card account without the need for using on-street machines. With the City and County now in Coronavirus Tier 3, the app will provide a contact-free way for Robin Hood Card customers who still need to travel to pay for their journeys. Robin Hood Cards can be used to pay for travel on most bus, tram and train operators across the city, with a capped daily price on Pay As You Go cards, and

savings on season products. The app is available to Android users and is expected to become available on iOS devices later this month;

- (m) Nottingham Trams has become the first light rail operator in England to achieve formal recognition for its commitment to customer service excellence, with the award of the ServiceMark accreditation from the Institute of Customer Service. A great deal of work went into achieving this accreditation, and employees at all levels were praised for embracing a culture that puts customers at the heart of its operations;
- (n) Nottingham Trams has partnered with East Midlands Railway, British Transport Police and Framework to carry out a week of action in relation to rough sleeping around Nottingham Station. Posters have been displayed on the platform and Travel Officers have been issued with contact cards to provide to rough sleepers with information on where they can seek assistance;
- (o) wider work is underway on safeguarding vulnerable people on the tram network, as cases have increased during the Coronavirus period. Children found travelling on the network without a ticket are provided with an escort to their destination stop, and any missing child recognised by staff is accompanied and supported until the Police arrive to collect them. Staff are trained to recognise and assist passengers with symptoms of Alzheimer's and dementia;
- (p) training is being set up with the Samaritans to help staff spot behaviours around the tram network of someone who may be at risk of making a suicide attempt. Staff are trained to identify at risk people, stop them, and then alert the correct authorities. Appropriate information is shared with the Police, CPOs and other public transport providers to help identify people across the whole transport network who may need assistance. Drivers need to be very vigilant, and are provided with strong defensive driving training. Due to the importance of this safeguarding work, the procedures in place will be reviewed on an annual basis;
- (q) the Committee thanked all of the staff on the tram network for their important work, strong performance and clear commitment to passenger safety during this particularly difficult Coronavirus period – which may yet continue for some time.

The Committee noted the operational performance report and progress update.

14 Network Safety and Accessibility Update

The Committee noted that there are no further network safety and accessibility matters to raise, currently.

15 Tramlink Update

Andrew Conroy, Chief Operating Officer at Tramlink Nottingham, provided an update on Tramlink's engagement with customers during the Coronavirus period. The following points were discussed:

- (a) Tramlink's primary aims across the last few months have been on effective communication with customers and supporting the tram operational team, and to

seek to return tram usage to previous levels. A customer survey has been released on tram performance and safety during the Coronavirus period, and is still open for responses – which will be reported to the next meeting of the Committee;

- (b) messaging has been circulated to passengers on walking or getting a bus to their destination if the tram is busy. Engagement has taken place with colleges and universities to help students use the tram safely. Discussions are being held with businesses in the city on how customers can be encouraged to return to shops in a safe way, and it is intended to extend these discussions to businesses along the network in the county. As people are now shopping more locally, short-hop tickets are being retained. Planning is also underway to support transportation to possible vaccination sites;
- (c) the Committee felt that it was important to rebuild patronage of the public transport network in a safe way, and welcomed the current approach taken by Tramlink.

The Committee noted the update from Tramlink.

16 Issues Raised by Committee Members and Citizens

The Committee noted that no issues have been raised by committee members or citizens for discussion at the meeting.

17 Work Plan

The Chair presented the Committee's current work plan for the 2020/21 municipal year. The following points were discussed:

- (a) the Committee felt that it was very important, going forward, for the procedures for safeguarding vulnerable people on and around the tram network to be reported on annually. It considered that it would be helpful to receive a report on the ticketing infrastructure in place across the network (including the balance to be struck between physical ticket machines and app-based payment systems), and the level of incidents of passengers travelling without a ticket and how this is managed operationally;
- (b) from June next year, all validator heads and associated cabling are due to be changed to enable contactless payment for tickets. The relocation of an underused validator from the entrance to the Queen's Medical Centre to a more accessible location outside the Nottingham NHS Treatment Centre forms part of this upgrade plan. A feasibility and cost assessment is underway to plan the moving of this point, as the engineering considerations in relocating this infrastructure are not straightforward. The Committee requested that an update on the proposed solution is provided for its next meeting.

Resolved to add the following items to its work plan:

- **an annual review of the safeguarding processes in place for vulnerable people on the network;**

- **a review of the ticketing infrastructure on the network, and the operational side of revenue protection;**
- **an update on the improvement of the ticket payment infrastructure at the Nottingham NHS Treatment Centre;**
- **an update on the results of the current customer satisfaction survey.**

18 Future Meeting Dates

- **Tuesday 9 March 2021 at 2:00pm**